

Remarks Following Discussions With President Lech Kaczynski of Poland *February 9, 2006*

President Bush. Mr. President, welcome to the Oval Office. It's really good to have you here. We have just had a extensive discussion about important issues. After this press statement, we'll go have lunch and continue our discussions. And we've got a lot to discuss, because we're strong allies and friends. We're friends in liberty. We believe in peace.

I told the President it's amazing to be sitting with somebody who knows the difference between living in a society that is not independent and not free, and one that—and now he's the President of a free country. I thanked the President and the Polish people for their support of the democracy movement in Iraq.

We had a very interesting discussion about NATO and the European Union. You can be an active member of the EU, a loyal member of the EU, and a friend of the United States at the same time. I asked the President his advice on Ukraine. That's what friends do; they share information and share strategic thoughts.

We talked about the importance for commercial ties. We'll continue those discussions over lunch. The President of Poland comes to a country that respects Poland. There's a lot of Polish Americans that still got great pride for the homeland. We congratulate you on your victory and welcome you.

Thanks for coming.

President Kaczynski. President Bush has spoken of the subject of our talks. The first part has been extended, to a certain extent, and we will continue our discussions during lunch. We have discussed issues relating to NATO, the European Union, Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia and Iraq and Afghanistan. In other words, to speak—say very briefly, we've discussed all issues that both countries are interested in.

Mr. President and myself have discussed issues relating to freedom in Ukraine and Belarus. And the support of the United States for all actions that are leading to freedom in Ukraine and Belarus are very important for Poland at the same time. There have been certain signals that might lead to an improvement of relations between the Republic of Poland and the Russian Federation. We have no certainty yet, but these signals we have received, and we're hoping for an improvement in relations between Poland and Russia.

We shall continue our talks in a few minutes.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Kaczynski spoke in Polish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the Resignation of Claude Allen as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy *February 9, 2006*

Claude Allen has been a trusted adviser since 2001. As Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services, he worked hard to

improve the health and welfare of all Americans. During the past year, he has served as my top domestic policy adviser at the

White House and has helped develop policies that will strengthen our Nation's families, schools, and communities.

Claude is a good and compassionate man, and he has my deep respect and my

gratitude. I thank him for his many years of principled and dedicated service to our country. Laura and I wish Claude, Jann, and their family all the best.

Remarks to the House Republican Conference in Cambridge, Maryland February 10, 2006

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you very much. It's an honor to be back here again. Mr. Speaker, thank you for your leadership and your friendship. One of the real joys of being in Washington is to be able to work with Speaker Hastert. He is a straightforward—[*applause*]. Some of my buddies at home say, "What's he like?" I say, "He's a straightforward, no-nonsense kind of guy who's here to get things done." And, Mr. Speaker, thank you for your leadership and your friendship.

I congratulate the majority leader, John Boehner; looking forward to working with you, John. Congratulations to you. I appreciate Roy Blunt. He's a—right after I called Boehner from Air Force One, I called Blunt, and I said, "I want to say two things to you: One, thanks for waging the race for the majority leader; and second, thanks for passing the reconciliation package." He said, "If I could count votes as good on my race as I did on the reconciliation package"—[*laughter*]. But I appreciate a man who is gracious in defeat. But he's still got an important position, and I'm looking forward to working with you, Roy. Thank you.

I appreciate the rest of the folks up here. Thank you all for coming. It is an honor to serve our country with you. I hope you feel that way as well. There is nothing more heartwarming and exhilarating than to represent the good people of the United States of America here in Washington. I want to thank you all for your service. I particularly want to thank your families for your service

to our country as well. The cause is noble and worthwhile.

A couple of things I want to say, and then I'll be glad to answer some of your questions. First, the state of our Union is strong, and it's getting stronger. And I want to thank you all for putting policies in place that, on the one hand, spread prosperity throughout the country and, at the same time, spread freedom and peace throughout the world.

You know, we've overcome a lot in this country. If you really think about what this economy has been through, it's amazing how resilient and flexible and strong our economy is. We're growing at faster rates than any major industrialized nation in the world. We've added over 4.5 million new jobs since April of 2003. The national unemployment rate is 4.7 percent. Productivity is high.

One of the things we've been working together is to promote an ownership society. More people own a home than ever before in our Nation's history. More minority families own a home than ever before in our Nation's history. Small businesses are thriving. The economic plan we put in place is working. And it starts with saying to the American people, "We trust you with your own money."

We've got a record, and it's a record of accomplishment. We have worked closely together to achieve results for the American people. We've been fiscally wise with the people's money. I want to thank you